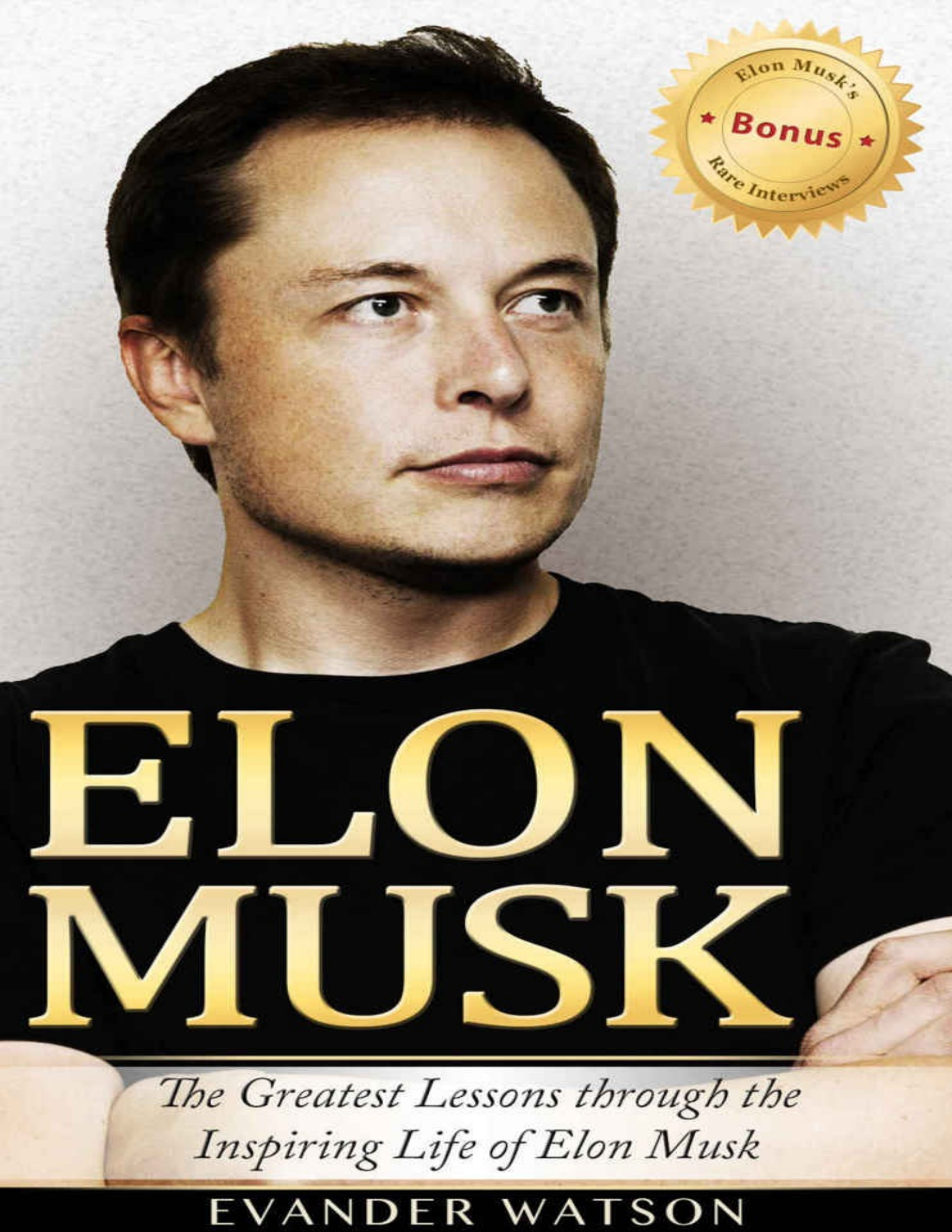

ELON MUSK

The Greatest Lessons through the Inspiring Life of Elon Musk

EVANDER WATSON

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Elon Musk

The Greatest Lessons Through the Inspiring Life of Elon Musk

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Foreword

As a young kid I was always fascinated by the lives of great men and women. These people either had a vision, a purpose, or a dream and were able to bring it to life, changing the way we behave, we interact, and ultimately think. I consider these men and women immortal mentors to the rest of us! It is my pleasure to share with you the life lessons of these great mentors!

One such great man is Elon Musk, as a young man, Musk determined three main things that were likely to change the world in his lifetime, the internet, renewable energy and space travel. Then, he set out to make a splash in those three arenas. Starting with a $28,000 loan, he formed an early internet startup business, made $22 million, from what was the largest ever startup sale at the time, created a company that eventually became half of PayPal and then used the money from the sale of that company to create a cheaper form of space travel and invest heavily in electric cars.

Keep reading for more on a man who is a true visionary and one of the greatest minds of our generation.

Introduction: Meet Elon Musk

“I like to be involved in things that change the world. The Internet did, and space will probably be more responsible for changing the world than anything else. If humanity can expand beyond the Earth, obviously that's where the future is.” —Elon Musk

While the name Elon Musk is likely the first time most people have ever heard the Musk name, for those who are members of the tribe, legends of great Musks abound. The family has always fancied itself as adventurers and heroes, they tell stories of the grandparents who were the first people to ever

fly between Africa and Australia, the great-grandfather who won a race across the entire length of Africa, the grandmother who was the first female Canadian chiropractor and more.

The Musk family motto certainly seems to be that they are different than everyone else and they prove it by taking risks. With these types of stories running through his head is it any wonder that Elon Musk took it upon himself to reignite the world's love of space travel? Or that he is funding not one, but two different alternatives to the standard automobile causing some people to call him the Henry Ford of the modern age.

Despite coming from an average upbringing and working his way through college, Musk made his initial fortune as one of the major successes of the Dotcom boom of the 1990s, when most people would have then spent the rest of their lives resting on their laurels, he then threw himself into a second startup while barely stopping to take a breath. After making five times the amount of his original fortune when his second company was purchased by eBay, he again doubled down, though at this point he began aiming a little higher.

He next invested the sum total of his not insubstantial fortune, based on where he hopes and expects the human race to be in 30 years, in making the future a reality. Space travel and electric cars are his primary concerns, though he also has holdings in the largest solar power supplier in California. In his spare time, he is also working to ensure the human race isn't enslaved

by the inevitable creation of artificial intelligence. If there is a way to make the world a better place for the next generation which sounds both impossible, and straight out of a science fiction novel, then it is a fair bet Musk has put at least $1 million towards making it a reality.

While certainly extremely smart, Musk's biggest skills are noticing signs that indicate likely outcomes in the future and absorbing knowledge as efficiently as possible. For example, when he wanted to send a greenhouse to Mars, he read everything he could on rocket science, talked to everyone in the field he could and then worked out a practical business plan because he then understood rocket science. With his skills and business acumen, Musk could literally do anything he wants, and humanity as a whole is lucky that what he wants to do is make the planet a better place.

Adolescence

“I don’t have an issue with serving in the military per se, but serving in the South African army suppressing black people just didn’t seem like a really good way to spend time.” – Elon Musk

The oldest of three children, Elon Reeve Musk was born in South Africa on June 28, 1971 to Errol and Maye Musk. His mother was a Canadian born model and his father, South African by birth, was an electromechanical engineer. Musk took after his father’s love of technology early in life and while he was often said to be a quiet and introverted child, his knack for

computers was readily apparent.

So much so that at the age of ten he taught himself how to program in BASIC using the family's Commodore VIC-20 computer. In addition to a knack with computers, Musk proved his entrepreneurial spirit soon after, when he sold a videogame he created called *Blastar* to a local computer magazine for roughly $500 at the age of 12.

Lesson 1: Even the most unlikely goals can be achieved as long as you try.

These early successes were frequently marred by a difficult time at a variety of private schools where the small, quiet boy was frequently tormented by classmates. The bullying grew so severe at one point that a number of other boys actually tossed him down a flight of stairs and then proceeded to beat him so badly that he was hospitalized soon after.

Musk's parents divorced in 1980 and after that he primarily lived with his father all around South Africa. When Musk was a teenager, Apartheid was still the rule of the day in South Africa and around this time the South African military was actively working on silencing opposition. Military service was mandatory and Musk, anxious to avoid such things began looking for a way out.

Anxious to be a part of the burgeoning US tech scene, as well as avoid military service, Musk decided to head for the United States as soon as he

graduated from secondary school at the age of 17. This dream was deferred for a time as he initially had trouble gaining entry to the country. Not to be deterred, however, Musk instead moved to Canada in 1989, taking advantage of his mother's Canadian heritage to gain entry to the country.

Lesson 2: If the shortest path to your goal is unobtainable, finding a workaround then becomes the shortest path to success.

Not out of the woods yet, Musk took his Canadian citizenry and moved to Montreal where he spent a year nearly destitute, saving what he could to prepare for college and working a string of menial jobs to scrape by. During this time Musk took any job he could find, he shoveled grain bins, tended vegetables, cut logs and even cleaned the boiler room at a saw mill. This job was extremely dangerous and required the use of a hazmat suit. Nevertheless, Musk toughed it out, one of only a handful of new hires to do so.

Lesson 3: Planning for your dreams is not enough, you must be willing to dedicate yourself to the idea of success.

The next year he managed to gain entrance to Queens University in Ontario where he then studied for two years. During this time, Musk was reunited with his mother and his younger brother and future business partner Kimbal. When he wasn't studying, he and Kimbal would read the newspaper to

discover interesting locals that they wanted to meet. The pair would then take turns calling the objects of their interest to see if they could meet for lunch.

This ultimately lead to an internship for Musk who one day had called up the then-head of the Bank of Nova Scotia. The bank president, Peter Nicholson, was impressed by the two young men's request and had lunch with them some six months later when his schedule allowed. From the resulting meeting, Nicholson was so impressed that he offered Musk an internship for the following summer.

Lesson 4: Perseverance is extremely important in order to achieve your goals. If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.

Musk was already planning for the future, even at the age of 18, so much so that Nicholson's daughter can still remember a conversation they had about electric cars at Musk's eighteenth birthday a few months after the scheduled lunch.

Lesson 5: It is never too early to start planning the steps required to achieve your goals.

In 1992, Musk's original dream finally came to fruition, his time at Queens University had set him apart as a phenomenal student and he was able to

move to the United States after earning a scholarship to the University of Pennsylvania. Musk's time in Pennsylvania was fruitful, the next year he earned his Bachelor's Degree in Physics and the following year, earned on in Economics as well.

Lesson 6: Hard work and perseverance can be combined to achieve even the most unlikely things.

During this time, Musk experienced a bought of depression and turned to a wide variety of religious and philosophical texts in order to make sense of his struggle. Ultimately, however, the greatest insight came from the science fiction classic by Douglas Adams titled *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy.* In this book the meaning of life is revealed to be the number 42. This seemingly meaningless answer allowed Musk to realize the importance of asking the right questions, which set him on his unique path through life.

Lesson 7: It doesn't matter where you take your inspiration from, as long as the lessons you take from it are the right ones.

The question he asked: What would have the greatest impact on humanity as a whole. The answer he came up with: space colonization, renewable energy and the internet. Two of the answers he has currently helped revolutionize, he is working on the third.

While at the University of Pennsylvania, Musk met another future Silicon

Valley resident in Adeo Ressi. The two became fast friends and even went in together to rent a large, 10-bedroom home that had once belonged to a fraternity to use as a local nightclub for they and their friends.

After leaving the University of Pennsylvania, Musk moved to California to start work on a doctorate program at Stanford University in the field of applied physics. Just two days into his time at Stanford, Musk famously told a professor that he was in California to start an internet company, he just wanted the Stanford program as a fallback. Musk left Stanford soon after to start his first company Zip2, four years later he would be a millionaire.

Lesson 8: No matter how certain success appears, it is always in your best interest to have a plan B.

Zip2 and X.com

“I didn’t really expect to make any money. If I could make enough to cover the rent and buy some food that would be fine. As it turns out, it turned out to be quite valuable in the end.” – Elon Musk”

Shortly before he decided to leave Stanford, Musk watch as the nascent Netscape Communications, started by a man younger than he was, quadruple in value the instant it went public. This was the catalyst that proved to him the internet was the place to be. At this point, Musk had little more than a car, $2,000 in a bank account and few local friends to speak of. Nevertheless, he believed in himself and was confident enough to drop out of Stanford after less than 48 hours.

Lesson 9: It is important to take the time to notice emerging trends so as to best capitalize on them when the time is right.

Finally, free of school and in the land of internet startups, Musk brought his brother Kimbal out to California in 1995 and the two promptly started work on a software company called Zip2. Started with a $28,000 loan from their father, the set about creating a city guide for use by newspaper publishers. The company came about after Musk met the people at a digital mapping company named Navteq.

Musk convinced Navteq to let him use their maps online before buying a CDROM directory of local businesses. Musk's programing skills then allowed him to write a small amount of code which then connected the business directory to the map to show search results based on predetermined criteria. Not long after he was already courting several major local newspapers and offering his service through their websites.

Lesson 10: It doesn't matter what the origins of a good idea are, the best ideas always rise to the top.

This was the early days of the internet, and the medium was expanding rapidly, Zip2 was essentially an early digital yellow pages and Musk marketed it as a way to provide newspapers with a valid reason for existing in the digital space. The original Zip2 offices were in a rundown office that served as both company headquarters and living space for the Musk brothers.

The ceiling leaked, even after a liberal application of caulk, and for the first few months the only furniture was a pair of futons and a small table for Musk's computer.

Lesson 11: In order to achieve success, you must be willing to make sacrifices in the short term

Musk's computer even served double duty, serving as his programing station by night, and server to run Zip2 functions during the day. The server initially ran over a dialup modem before Musk punched a hole in the floor and connected to a conveniently located internet service provider directly.

By 1996, Zip2 had come to the attention of a local venture capital firm who offered the nascent company 3 million dollars in funding. In exchange, Musk had to give up the role of CEO to a man named Richard Sorkin who had an MBA from Stanford. Sorkin expanded the company, landing contracts with the likes of the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Sun.* To Musk's chagrin he also sought investment money from major newspapers as well.

Lesson 12: Sometimes to realize our dreams we need to let go and learn from those who have more experience than us.

As such, Musk watched while other companies such as Yahoo! moved towards the future while, in his view, Zip2 was stuck in the past. This

continued until 1998 when Musk found himself with just 7 percent of the total amount of Zip2 stock. Despite founding a successful internet startup, he was now in a Vice President position with little actual power and could do nothing but watch what remained be slowly chipped away.

The final straw came later that same year when Sorkin tried to sell the company to another search engine company called Citysearch in an effort to create a nationwide local search engine, a move which Musk decided he could not stand for. Striking back internally, he spread his message of revolt inside the company until a majority of the managers were behind him and threatening to quit if Sorkin was not removed from power and the merger squashed.

Lesson 13: It is important to always know your limits and remain true to yourself first and foremost.

While Musk wanted to be reinstated as CEO, the majority of the board was comprised of those on the side of the newspapers and after a lengthy battle, Derek Proudian of Mohr Davidow's was installed instead.

Lesson 14: Even when things appear to be going your way, it is important to never count your chickens before they're hatched.

While this initially seemed to be mostly what Musk wanted, the results

ultimately ended up with the company being sold to Compaq soon after. Compaq ultimately paid over $300 million for Zip2, the largest amount ever paid for an internet company at the time. This left Musk with $22 million in his pocket and somewhat of a chip on his shoulder.

Compaq purchased the company with the goal of making its AltaVista search engine, a long dead Google competitor, more competitive in the even then already crowded search engine market. At the time, Zip2 provided software for over 120 newspaper groups around the country.

Despite the apparent success of his company, Musk only ever saw Zip2 as a failure. When starting out, he had wanted to help shape the internet for the good of everyone, and instead built software that a dying medium could use to stave off obsolesce for a few more years. Nevertheless, Musk was ready to try again and quickly started work on an online platform for financial services designed to make traditional options obsolete.

Lesson 15: At the end of the day, the perceptions of others don't matter, you ultimately determine your own metrics for success and failure.

At the time, Musk had this to say. "What they should have done is put me in charge…great things will never happen with VCs or professional managers… they don't have the creativity or insight."

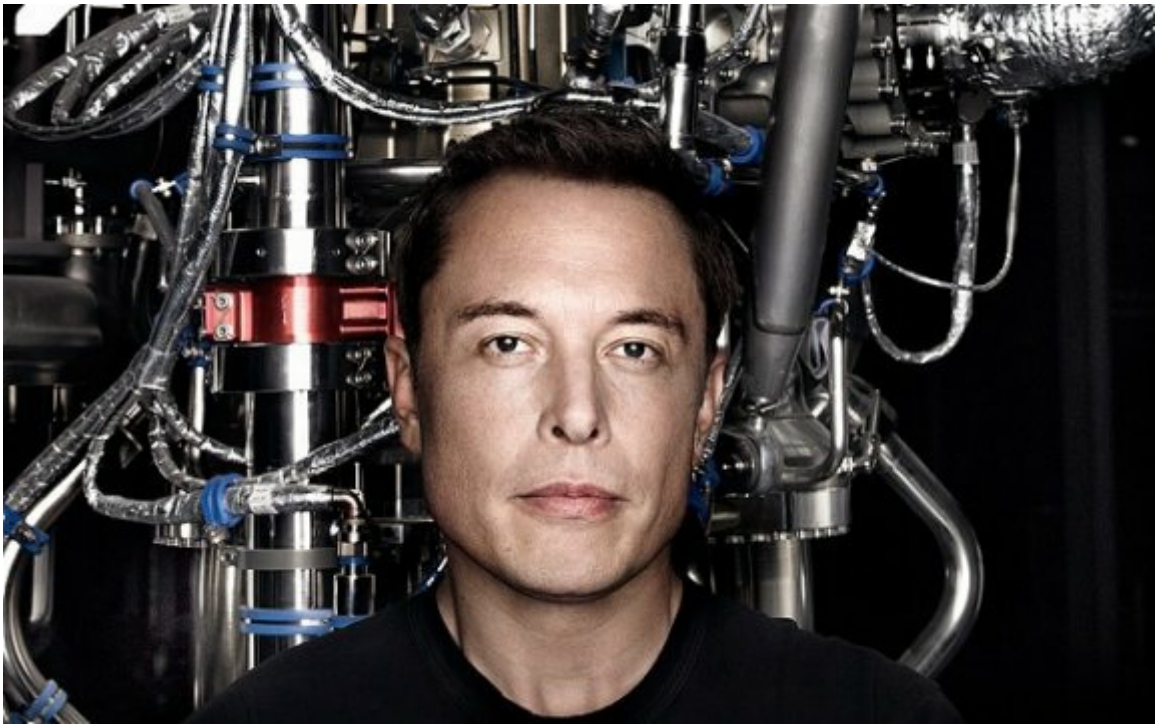
By 1999, Musk had the basics of his idea up and running as was ready to pitch his idea to Sequoia Capital, an investment firm that had help fund things like Cisco, Apple and Oracle. By the end of the day he had a $25-million-dollar investment promise to start work on his new project known as X.com.

While Musk's initial goals for X.com included most if not all of the features PayPal currently offers, his initial version was scaled back in order to more adequately focus on the problem of making person to person payments online a reality using email. Musk soon merged X.com with a competing but similar company by the name of Confinity.

This merger left Musk in charge and gave him access to the Confinity program known as PayPal. While the two technologies worked well together, the Confinity and X.com teams did not merge so easily. In fact, Musk spend the next 10 months trying to keep various visions, personalities and egos under control. Specifically, Confinity's founders, Max Levchin and Peter Thiel, found Musk to be too interested in micromanaging for their liking. This continued to the fall of 2000 when Musk took a two-week trip to meet with potential new investors; when he returned to work he learned that he had been disposed as CEO.

Lesson 16: No matter the specifics, interpersonal relationships are what truly lead a business to success or failure.

The X.com board decided to fire Musk and leave Thiel and Levchin in charge. The company was promptly renamed PayPal. In 2002 the company was purchased by eBay for a total of $1.5 billion in eBay stock for his share of 11.7 percent of PayPal, Musk was paid over $160 million.



SpaceX

“I’d like to die on Mars, just not on impact,” Elon Musk

After being ousted as CEO of his second company but before eBay purchased PayPal, Musk came up with the idea of what became known as Mars Oasis. The goal of this project was to launch a miniature greenhouse into space that would ultimately land on Mars with everything needed to grow food on Mars; with a secondary goal being to rejuvenate interest in the space program.

Lesson 17: Even in the midst of extreme success it is important to always have an eye on the future.

In search of a way to make this dream a reality, Musk traveled to Russia in October of 2001 with, among others, Adeo Ressi, to look at intercontinental ballistic missiles with which to launch the greenhouses. Musk's reception in Russia was initially cold however and it was not until 2002 that he was offered a single ballistic missile for the sum of $8 million a price he found completely unreasonable.

This led Musk to determine that it would simply be cheaper to start a company that built rockets capable of flying to Mars which would then give him as many rockets as he needed. From there, Musk determined that the average cost of a rocket to build is only 3 percent of what it sells for. Musk doesn't dream of going to space simply for something to do, he firmly believes that interplanetary travel will serve to protect humanity from an extinction level event that he feels is eventually inevitable.

Lesson 18: When it comes to properly preparing for the future, the logical answer may not always be the simplest or easiest.

SpaceX was soon formed and Musk determined a process whereby he could create rockets capable of reaching Mars and still sell them to others at 10 percent of what the average market value was while still earning a 70 percent profit on every rocket sold. The stated goal of SpaceX is to turn humanity into a spacefaring race.

Lesson 19: It doesn't matter what the field is or how closed off a marketplace may seem, all it takes is one right idea to turn everything on its head.

With Space Exploration Technologies (SpaceX) up and running, Musk promptly sunk more than 50 percent of his eBay payout earnings into the company which currently creates and develops space launch vehicles with a goal of advancing modern rocket technology.

Lesson 20: When you know you are on to something, don't be afraid to bet big.

Prior to getting interested in the Mars Oasis idea, Musk had never studied rocket science before, but he didn't let a little thing like the lack of decades of experience stop him. When he started working with rocket scientist Jim Cantrell early on in the process, he simply borrowed all of Cantrell's books on the topic and read them. Still not satisfied, he went out and hired every single rocket scientist that would consult with him on the topic so that he could truly learn everything he could about the field.

Lesson 21: Forewarned is forearmed, once you are committed to a course of action it is important you learn everything you can and to never stop learning.

During this stage of the process, Musk's stated goal was to simply buy a

rocket capable of making it to the moon. Nevertheless, even during this early stage he was working on his own ideas and consulting with other scientists to develop what would ultimately become known as the Falcon 1.

Lesson 22: Never have only a single pot in the fire at a time, always plan for additional eventualities.

During this time, Musk has also stated that he was heavily influenced by the *Foundation* series by noted author Isaac Asimov who also believed that the proper application of space exploration is key to preserving and expanding the human consciousness. He has also been known to say that the amount of time it took humanity to crawl out of the oceans and to expand beyond just existing on earth are right on par with one another.

Lesson 23: Set goals that seem extreme, you just might achieve them.

In just seven years, Musk's company has created unmanned two launch vehicles, the Falcon 1 and 9, as well as an unmanned spacecraft called Dragon. The Falcon 1 was the first ever liquid fuel vehicle that has been launched into orbit by a private company in 2009. Three years later, the Dragon was contracted by NASA to deliver goods to the international space station. The Dragon is currently in use instead of the Space Shuttle when it comes to orbital flight.

SpaceX crossed another milestone off its list in 2013 when the Falcon 9 was

used to successfully launch a satellite into space which was then able to connect to the earth's rotation. In 2015, the company launch a Falcon 9, this time with a Deep Space Climate Observatory satellite to help learn more about how solar flares effect technology on earth. Currently, SpaceX is petitioning the United States government for the permission to launch 4,000 satellites into orbit that will be used to ensure the entire world has access to fast, reliable internet services.

SpaceX is currently the world's largest producer of rocket engines and their Merlin 1D engine, the most powerful engine in the world, produces enough power to lift 40 midsized cars. In 2006, SpaceX was given its first NASA contract along with $ 1.6 billion for numerous test flights of the Falcon 9 as well as the eventual Dragon spaceship.

The stated goal of SpaceX is to drastically reduce the cost of spaceflight to the point that it is a realistic concern moving forward. Musk hopes to send a manned mission to Mars within the next 20 years and hopes to have a colony established by 2040 that is home to as many as 80,000 people. Perhaps unsurprisingly, he views all machinery and transportation on Mars as running on electricity.

Not content to simply make space travel a more cost effective reality than it ever has before, Musk has also started the Musk Foundation which has as its state goal the discovery of clean and renewable energy sources for use in space travel.

Lesson 24: Don’t be satisfied with what others would consider success, always keep striving for more.

Tesla Motors

I've actually made a prediction that within 30 years a majority of new cars made in the United States will be electric. And I don't mean hybrid, I mean fully electric."-Elon Musk

Unlike the other companies he has been associated with, Musk was not involved in the creation of Tesla Motors, he simply got in on the ground floor by investing heavily in the initial round of funding the company requested in early 2004. Musk came on board as chairman, quickly taking a role in the company during the design of the Tesla Roadster.

Lesson 25: Be open to great ideas, wherever they come from.

Despite being involved in the early stages of the Roadster's design; Musk did

not take on an active role in the day to day running of the company until the start of the Great Recession in 2008. At that time, he assumed CEO status as well as a position known as product architect. Tesla Motors currently has three different models currently in production with a fourth, more affordable version being announced in March 2016.

Despite a relatively small install base, Tesla Motors is already being compared to the Ford Company and being called the first successful American automobile company to come into existence in over 100 years. According to a 2014 survey, the Tesla Model S is America's favorite car.

Musk first met Martin Eberhard and Marc Tarpenning in 2001 when the pair went to see Musk speak at a Mars Society conference where he outlined his ideas on space travel. They met again in 2004 with a fully working prototype electric vehicle, known as the TZero.

Musk was immediately interested and met with the Tesla team the following week, the initial 30-minute meeting ballooned out to 3 hours. The three men were all on the same page when it came to building an electric car that could stand up to anything else on the road. This was also the meeting where they worked out the strategy that Tesla would ultimately pursue, starting with a high-end model to capture the minds of the people before adopting an economy option to capture their hearts as well.

Lesson 26: True vision is being able to take something that everyone else

thought was a fantasy and see how to make it a reality.

The initial plan for the Tesla Roadster was for it to be released in 2006, with a goal of the company being profitable by 2008. A number of serious issues, both between Musk and Eberhard, then CEO of the company, as well as with the creation of the vehicle itself. Musk also took a larger role in the design of the vehicle, making a number of changes including the placement of the doors and the decision to create their own unique headlights.

Lesson 27: A quality first impression is worth taking the extra time and effort to create.

He also had ultimate say on changing the seat designs as well as the transmission, even the materials used in the interior. The myriad of changes did little to help the already strained production schedule while the new company had to suddenly worry about sourcing large amounts of supplies in a market no one within the company was terribly familiar with.

Soon Musk was taking on a larger role in the company, even traveling overseas to visit Lotus, the company responsible for manufacturing the Roadster in England, to get a better idea of the current state of the production line. Throughout it all, however, Musk's commitment for making the car as accessible and noticeable as possible remaining a driving force behind the vehicle.

Lesson 28: A leader with a strong vision is important to the success of any new company.

Ultimately, Eberhard was let go from the company with both Eberhard and Tesla Motors, funder the leadership of Musk, filing legal suits regarding parts of the issue. In 2008, Musk took over the day-to-day CEO duties himself, immediately firing 25 percent of the workforce. At the time, he had invested over $50 million into the company and felt the best way to protect his investment was to be hands on about it.

This was around the time that the first Tesla Roadsters were officially launching, and not always to great reviews. The early vehicles were prone to errors and by the middle of 2009, 75 percent of the original models had been recalled. All told, 2,150 Roadsters are produced and sent to 31 countries around the world.

In 2010, the company began taking preorders for its next generation of electric car, the Model S. That same year it filed an initial IPO of $100 million dollars, about twice what Musk had invested in the company up to this point. The company is currently worth an estimated $25 billion. Recently Musk was quoted as saying that he things his company may be worth up to $700 billion by 2026.

Under Musk’s direction, the company has released a 4-door Model S variety as well as the sports utility Model X. Tesla also manufactures and sells an

electric powertrain system that is currently used in Mercedes and Toyota electric vehicles and Musk even convinced the two companies to invest in Tesla prior to the release of the Roadster.

Lesson 29: Think outside the box when it comes to utilizing potentially untapped revenue streams.

The biggest concern regarding electric cars was primarily in relation to their limitations as far as long term travel is concerned. With this in mind, Musk has spearheaded an initiative to build power charging stations across the country and has since tripled the number of charging stations throughout the United States. Starting in 2014, Musk's salary with the company is $1, with the rest coming in the form of performance bonuses and stock options.

Lesson 30: It is important to understand the limitations of your product or service and do what you can to mitigate those concerns.

In an attempt to accelerate the creation of additional types of electric vehicles, Musk released the Tesla Motors patents regarding electrical motor technology to the public as long as they are used in good faith to propagate additional development in the area.

Lesson 31: Don't be afraid to make unconventional choices if you know they are right for you.

Despite their notable public presence, the company was only finally able to acquire Tesla.com in early 2016 as prior to that it has been held by a man named Stuart Grossman who held the domain for 22 years prior to Tesla's acquisition. After defending the name vigorously for quite some time, a personal visit from Musk ultimately settled the issue amiably though the exact price of the sale was not disclosed. Musk's friend Jason Calacanis said of a hypothetical version of the sale that it would have been worth it for the company to spend $1 million on web address acquisition.

Lesson 32: It is important to never underestimate the importance of brand name appeal and to never settle for less than the best.

Looking Towards the Future

What is the best thing we can do to ensure the future is good? Elon Musk

Lesson 33: The future is everyone's responsibility; it is important to take it seriously.

When he was still in college, Musk came up with three things that were going to change the face of the world in his lifetime: space colonization, renewable energy and the internet. While he is only in his forties, it is hard to say what he is ultimately going to be remembered for, there are simply too many things to choose from.

Lesson 34: Try everything you can, life is meant to be lived and the more things you try the broader your understanding of the sum total of life's experiences will be.

What's more, he's not yet done innovating as proven by the Hyperloop project, which he came up with in 2013 when the proposed California High Speed Rail System failed to live up to his expectations. The Hyperloop is a method of travel whereby users are propelled through the use of individual pressurized capsules on cushions of air that can travel upwards of 700 miles per hour.

Lesson 35: If reality doesn't seem to be living up to your standards, don't change your standards, change reality.

This product indicates Musk's likely impact on the world as a whole, not due to its potential to change travel as we currently know it, but by the fact that after he had the idea for the system, Musk brought in engineers from SpaceX and Tesla who spent nearly a year creating the basic designs for the Hyperloop as well as additional conceptual devices. Then, instead of proceeding with the project, he released the designs to the public, declaring them open source.

Lesson 36: It is important to have a clear vision for projects as they start and stick with that to the end even if other options have presented themselves.

Musk's proven commitment to the betterment of humanity as a whole has been proven time and again, this ideal was most recently shown with the

Hyperloop pod competition which is being sponsored by SpaceX. This competition pits a number of teams from around the world against one another to design and possibly build a model Hyperloop pod as a way to stimulate discussion of and feasibility of the Hyperloop. The initial stage of the competition took place in January 2016 where 30 of the 115 entrants were chosen to build models to compete on an Hyperloop test track sometime later in the year.

Along similar lines, SolarCity was created in 1993 by Lyndon and Peter Rive, Musk's cousins based on his idea for residential solar power. As of 2007, it became the largest provider of solar power in California. Musk is the chairman of the company and it has been a large part of Tesla Motors initiative to install electric car charging stations around California and abroad.

Lesson 37: **Success may not happen overnight, life is a marathon not a sprint, slow and steady wins the race.**

Finally, in 2015, Musk publicly revealed the creation of a nonprofit organization focused on creating and researching artificial intelligence in a way that is beneficial as well as safe for all of humanity. The stated goal of the company is to research artificial intelligence to prevent governments or large corporations from doing so in a way that will lead to widespread oppression of the masses.

Lesson 38: When you are in a position to be able to, it is important to always give back to charitable organizations.

Musk, along with other notable scientists including Stephen Hawking, believe that artificial intelligence poses the single greatest and most pressing existential threat when it comes to humanity's long term survival which is why OpenAI is a nonprofit which will never be obligated to focus on how to best use AI to better all of humanity. The work that OpenAI is doing will all be open-source and available to anyone who wishes to use it to benefit society.

Lesson 39: It is important to always consider things that other people do not as this will put you in league with the greatest thinkers in the world.

Musk is a co-chair of the product and is aware that what the nonprofit is striving for may well bring about what it is they fear most. Nevertheless, he believes that the best way to prepare against a possible dark timeline is to empower the people as a whole with something that they can use if and when they need to in order to return rights to the people. If everyone has AI, Musk concludes, then no one government or corporation could ever become an AI superpower.

Lesson 40: Sometimes you have to take risks in order to bring about important changes. Always understand the risks of what you are about to

undertake.

The goal of the nonprofit is to ultimately surpass traditional human intelligence, though it most likely won't happen for several decades. It is certainly prepared for the long haul however as there is currently $1 billon pledged to the project. Artificial Intelligence is something that humanity has been working towards for decades, despite the fact that there is no clear determination as to what the results of it might be. If Musk's latest project works out however, it just might be the one he is remembered for after all.

Greatest Lessons

I think it matters whether someone has a good heart.”-Elon Musk

When it comes to the life of Elon Musk, there are a wide variety of valuable lessons to learn, though without a doubt the most useful apply to following your dreams and believing in yourself.

Pay attention and act on what you see: Elon Musk’s rise to success didn’t happen because he was extremely lucky, rich, or even supernaturally smart. It

occurred because as a young man he took the time to pay attention to the signs around him and determine what they were trying to say. He saw the way the wind was blowing and understood that the internet, renewable energy and space travel were going to be huge, then did what he knew needed to be done in order to ensure he was in the right place at the right time to take full advantage of what his insight showed him was just on the horizon. Being dedicated and hardworking is great, understanding how to apply those skills to achieve the best results sets the truly successful apart from the rest.

Roll with the punches: There were multiple points in Musk's life, starting when he was just a small, beaten child, where he could have let himself be overwhelmed with the adversity he was facing and given in. Instead however, he picked himself up when Zip2 was going to be sold and did everything in his power to stop it. Then, when the company was purchased, he looked at what he perceived as having gone wrong at Zip2 in an effort to improve things at X.com. Then, when he was disposed at X.com, he used the opportunity to do something even more farsighted and amazing. Don't let unexpected events get you down, use them as an opportunity for improvement.

Don't be afraid to innovate: While at Zip2, Musk could have been happy selling services to established businesses, with X.com he could have been happy with its initial incarnation and never merged with PayPal. He could have simply bought a rocket from the Russians and been happy as merely a Tesla investor. Likewise, he could have said the California High Speed Rail

System was good enough or that artificial intelligence will take care of itself. Instead, he saw systems in place in the real world that he thought needed changing and instead of altering his expectations, alter reality to suit his needs.

Work hard: Elon Musk is currently the acting CEO of two companies, worth over $1 billon. He is also chairman of the board of several more in addition to funding two charities and a project to change long-range travel forever. Hard work is the backbone of any type of success. As Musk once pointed out, if you work 100 hours per week while everyone else is working 40, then you will accomplish everything they can do in a year in a third of the time.

Find your true purpose: In 2001, when faced with close to a $200-million-dollar windfall, Musk formed SpaceX, not with the sole intent of building better, cheaper rockets, though that was part of it; no, instead he formed the company with the goal of reigniting the world's fascination with space travel. That lofty goal is indicative of everything Musk does and it is important to find your own motivating factor if you hope to find success. Ask yourself what you are truly meant to be doing and then do whatever it takes to achieve it.

Don't be afraid to pivot: While it is important to have a plan, it is also important to not stick to that plan with unyielding conviction and change as external variables required. This is what Musk did when he realized that the current cost of rockets was extremely cost prohibitive and again when the

situation at Tesla demanded it. It is important to also note that when Musk pivoted he did so after careful consideration and after studying all the facts to determine the true best course of action moving forward. Pivoting is different than simply changing your plan at every little hiccup, it should always be a calculated move, not a rash, poorly thought out in-the-moment response.

Find your own success metric: When it comes to pursuing your dreams, it is important to have a firm grasp of what success or failure means to you, and not let anyone else tell you otherwise. For example, when Compaq purchased Zip2, Musk's 7 percent share left him with 22 million dollars. Being a multimillionaire after four years of work and not yet 30 years old would be considered a success by most anyone on the planet; but not Musk. While the sale to Compaq was undoubtedly a nice side effect, Zip2 had ultimately gone in a direction that Musk had not wanted, and therefore he saw it as a failure.

Only you know what your plans for the future are, which means no one else, regardless of how well off or respected they might appear, can truly say when you have been successful or not. Keep this in mind when apparent tragedy, or success, appears in life and never undertake a new plan without a firm idea in your mind of what will constitute success as well as failure; only then will you be able to truly chart your path to greatness.

Watson’s Farewell Note

“If you get up in the morning and think the future is going to be better, it is a bright day. Otherwise, it's not.” —Elon Musk

Thanks again for reading this book, learning from the great men and women of our time can provide plenty of opportunities to change our own lives to more closely mimic their patterns of success. If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, then there are few men who currently deserve to be flattered more liberally than Elon Musk.

From expanding the scope of what humanity is capable of to providing alternative fuels and realistic use options for the same in the 21st century, Musk is truly on the forefront when it comes to ensuring the future is now and that what still is on the horizon is as bright as possible. With Musk and those like him looking out for us, humanity just might take its first real step into the stars within the decade.

While Musk is out actively trying to save the world, it is enough for others to simply follow his example and try and do their own part when it comes to actively striving to make the world a better place each and every day. Look to

Musk as an example and know that no matter how unlikely or even impossible a dream might seem; it can be accomplished if you take the time to make a plan and act on it accordingly.

Finally,remember what Musk said when he realized he had a choice as to his future, **“ I could either watch it happen, or be part of it. ”** If you enjoyed this book, then I ’ d like to ask you for a favor, would you be kind enough to leave a review for this book on Amazon? It ’ d be greatly appreciated!

Warm regards,

Evander Watson

Bonus: Interviews of Success

Knowledge: [How did the Wharton Degree Help?] Stanford University Entrepreneurial Thought Leaders Conference October 2003.

“I think for instance teachers with a lot of the terminology, introduces you to concepts that you would otherwise, there's terminology there's something to be said for that, introduces you to concepts you would otherwise have to learn empirically.

I mean I think you can learn whatever you need to do to start a successful business either in school or out of school. A school in theory should help accelerate that process and I think oftentimes it does. It can be an efficient

learning process, perhaps more efficient than empirically learning lessons.

I mean there are examples of successful entrepreneurs who never graduated high school and there are those that have PhDs. So I think the important principle is to be dedicated to learning what you need to know, whether that is in school or empirically."- Elon Musk

Success: [Can you talk a little bit about difference in the customer base you have targeted in SpaceX that enforces experiences with PayPal how much challenge that presents?] Stanford University Entrepreneurial Thought Leaders Conference October 2003. *"Yes. The customer base with SpaceX is dramatically different obviously from PayPal. PayPal is a consumer product whereas SpaceX we're selling rockets and the number of people who want to buy rockets is quite small. If anyone here has explained to everyone a rocket, I'd be glad to sell it to him. So it's much more of an individual selling process.*

There's a great deal more thought that goes to any purchase of a launch, much more so that signing up a PayPal account which doesn't really cost you much, and there's not a lot of viral marketing that's going to happen with a rocket I suspect. I'm hoping but I'm not counting on it.

I think successful entrepreneurs probably come in all sizes, shapes and flavors. I'm not sure there's any one particular thing. For me, some of the things I've described already I think are very important. I think really an

obsessive nature with respect to the quality of the product is very important and so being an obsessive compulsive is a good thing in this context.

Really liking what you do, whatever area that you get into, even if you're the best of the best, there's always a chance of failure so I think it's important that you really like whatever you're doing. If you don't like it, life is too short. I'd say also, if you like what you're doing, you think about it even when you're not working. It's something that your mind is drawn to and if you don't like it, you just really can't make it work I think.

Design: [Question about outsourcing] Q&A Session at the University of California in March of 2011. *"Businesses sometimes tend to be a little sort of fad-y. For a very long time there was a very strong outsourcing fad. But I don't think people really looked at the fundamentals in a lot of cases when they outsourced. Particularly when the technology is developing rapidly, it's important to have a very tight iteration loop between engineering and production, so as soon as you design something you can bring it to production right away.*

And the engineers can go on the floor and see the mistakes that they've made, the production people can talk to engineers and say, 'here are some good ideas,' and so you can evolve the product and get to a better design solution faster. I think this is an important thing that's often overlooked.

At SpaceX our rockets are lower cost than the Chinese, the Indians, anyone else, and that's before reusability is taken into account. I think it's largely

because of that tight iteration loop."- Elon Musk

Future Innovation: [Question about future projects and failure.] The Future of Energy and Transport November 2012. *"I think I'm going to stay on electric cars and rockets for a while. It was actually never my intent to run Tesla, because running two companies is quite a burden, actually. I sometimes run into people who think, oh, if you're CEO of the company then they sort of imagine themselves, if they were CEO of the company, they would grant themselves lots of vacation and do lots of fun things.*

It's doesn't quite work that way. What you actually get is, a distillation of the worst things going on in the company. So, the idea of taking on something more, is very frightening. Possibly, at some point in the future, certainly not the near term, there's an opportunity to create an electric jet, eventually. I do think I want to create an electric jet that is really exciting.

Something that would be supersonic, vertical takeoff and landing, pure electric, and just a big leap forward. I'm quite confident it's doable, provided that there's a rough doubling of the energy density in batteries or capacitors. Basically, around the 500W/kg level is where it starts to make sense. I do think there's the possibility of a fifth mode of transport which I've mentioned tangentially, which I call the Hyperloop.

I'd like to publish something about that, maybe in the next month or two, once Tesla is at steady state production, and I want to flesh it out a bit so that I

can pre-address some of the rebuttals that people will come up with, rather than just put it out there and then have the rebuttal occur and have an unaddressed rebuttal. I guess a way to think of it is, it's like a cross between a Concorde and a rail gun."-Elon Musk

Life Philosophy: ['So when your friends, your family came up to you and said, Look, there are nations that can't do this... you're just a guy… what did you say?'] Conversation with Elon Musk, Kahn Academy April 2013. "*Well, so... umm.... I had a lot of friends trying to talk me out of starting a rocket company because they thought it was crazy, and a friend of mine made me watch a video of rockets blowing up, and there were lots of people that thought it was a really crazy idea, and there were some people who tried to start rocket companies and not succeeded and they tried to talk me out of it, and, but the thing is, the premise to talk me out of it was - well, we think you're going to lose the money that you invest - and I was like, well, that was my expectation anyway, so I don't really mind if I lose it..."-Elon Musk*